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THE DARK ELF CITY OF HOSUTH

by Ree Soesbee

The lizardfolk of Hssith were once a primitive people, foraging and hunting for their daily fare beneath the watchful eye of their patron — the Sun God. They lived in thatched villages, huddled so closely that other more civilized societies would call it a city.

But when the earth shook and the mountains slid into the river, their lives changed forever.

Deep beneath the mountains on the edge of Hssith swamp, thick, muddied water consumed a dark elf city. All the vaunted magic of the people was not enough to halt the cataclysm. The mountain fell and the city flooded.

Bearing little more than their precious libraries, the dark elves rose and swore to unearth their fallen city. Until then, however, the elves would have to make due.

Hssith, now called Hosuth, is a swamp city of lizardfolk enslaved by dark elves. The stagnant cityscape reflects a primitive civilization oppressed by higher intellect — a race of slaves laboring under the iron fist of tyrannical masters. The city is open to traders, merchants of all races, and adventurers that seek to steal the prizes buried in the lost city below the new-made lake. But beware. You are not the only ones who seek to uncover what has been lost...

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Requires the use of the
Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook,
Third Edition, published by
Wizards of the Coast®



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This adventure is designed to be easily dropped into your existing *Third-Edition D&D* campaign. It can be run in a just a single session and makes for an excellent evening's gaming. To prepare yourself to run the adventure, you should read it completely at least once to familiarize yourself with the material. You may wish to photocopy the map in the center of the book for ease of use as well. The text on the back of the book can be read to your players to introduce them to the adventure. After that, you're ready to begin. Good luck!

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(128 Pages, Softbound)



GAME MASTER BACKGROUND

Hosuth is a campaign setting designed for characters of all races and classes, provided that they are open-minded and at least outwardly tolerant of slavery. The city itself is comprised of several different features: a swamp, mountains, hills, rivers, and lakes, and wilderness.

Despite its primitive appearance, Hosuth's unique climate allows for either straightforward, combat heavy adventures, or it can be a backdrop for complex political games. The dark elf rulers of the city are tolerant toward humans and other humanoids. They must be, or their city would die from lack of trade. The changes that the dark elf overlords forced upon the once-primitive city are drastic and require supplies of stone, lumber, grain, and other essentials. To this end, the city is open for trade.

The city is split into two areas: the dark elf regions and the still primitive slave quarters. When travelers first approach the city, the manicured vegetation covering the majority of the upper class areas of Hosuth is striking. Tremendous weeping willows, their limbs braided together with vine and covered in thick mosses, shield the stone or oak buildings below from any trace of sunlight. The river that flows through this area is girded with stone walls, constrained by aqueducts and strong dikes, and has bridges crossing the churning waters at every major intersection.

In the slave areas, however, the vegetation grows thick and lush, bursting up in disorganized, swampy groves. The buildings are thatched huts, long mead-halls, and low walls to protect small gardens. They defy order, scattered on the hillocks that rise above the soggy ground. Trodden dirt paths that vanish at the river's edge serve as roads, and the architecture is primitive and temporary.

Small creeks and river tributaries wind through the region. In the dark elf areas, hillocks are shored up; smaller waterways are channeled through open metal cylinders to pass as a crude sewage system. Buildings are connected by stone bridges whose pilings sink deep into the soggy earth. In the lower class areas, the river tributaries form a road-system for the amphibious lizardfolk slaves who swim through the watery thoroughfares with ease.

Dark elf guards patrol all portions of Hosuth, maintaining peace in the city. For three generations, the lizardfolk have suffered under oppression, while the long-lived dark elves hardly notice the passing of time. The slave population, far removed from the same event, is contained and relatively content, making the guards almost superfluous.

Inside this book you'll find the details of the dark elf city of Hosuth. Although the city is primarily lizardfolk, the oppressive dark elves maintain superiority through magic and a tight lock-down of all weaponry. How the PCs come to visit such a place is ultimately up to the GM, but this book should provide many adventures for those willing to delve beneath the murky waters of Hosuth.

HOSUTH

Population: 18,000

Government: Tyrannical Dictatorship (Hegemony)

Imports: Stone, lumber, fine silks, spices, food

Exports: Grain, fish, perfume, silver deposits

Industry: Shipbuilding

Important NPCs: Dark Elves: Overseer Tamn'sharr

Verekk (City Overlord), Arachne (Innkeeper, Sorceress and Purveyor of Pleasures), Captain Dechan Xul (Guard Captain). Lizardfolk: Ysarr & Gress (Innkeepers), Tssicho (Shaman and Resistance leader)

LOCATIONS

A. THE EDGE OF THE CITY

The swamp accounts for most of the natural habitat around the city of Hosuth. Travelers not taking the main roads into or out of the city find their travel times doubled; tripled during the monsoon season. Many wild creatures roam the swamp, and residents of the city consider it extremely dangerous. Some recount tales of black dragons, swamp serpents, and other terrible beasts.

Watchtowers dot the edge of the city, and the largest of them rise from high hillocks near the main roads that lead both east and west out of Hosuth. Built by lizardfolk slaves some 50 years ago, these roads are stable methods of travel into and out of the swamp. The earth here is hard-packed and bordered on either side by low stone walls that keep the road from flooding during high-water seasons.

Dark elves stand guard in the watchtowers. They are professional and mildly courteous. They allow travelers into and out of the city freely, but occasionally harass a high or grey elf traveler. Guards found arguing with guest meet severe punishment from the Captain of the Guard.

The dark elves impose a 10 gp per wagon tariff on goods entering or leaving the city, and the weight limit (500 pounds) on city roads is strictly enforced. Weapons in the city must be peace-bound at all times.

There are six manned watchtowers around Hosuth with no other obstacle to offer defense for the populace. These watchtowers have signal fires to warn of enemy approach. Ten dark elf guards (Ftr 3, Sor3 and Wiz 3) make up the contingent for each watchtower. The seventh tower stands at the approximate center of the city, rising from one of the largest hillocks. It is the Captain's Tower (#1). From its upper balconies the captain maintains a view of all the other towers and from the lower balconies he can see beneath the thick canopy of the dark elf quarter.

B. NORTHERN LAKE

The northern lake is a source of fresh water and fish for the residents of Hosuth. The water also provides an ideal climate for the gestation of lizardfolk eggs, and several hatcheries cluster on the western edge of the lake. Both dark elven troops and lizardfolk watch over them.

The Hatcheries

Lizardfolk are amphibious egg layers. As part of their mating ceremonies, the male builds a spire of driftwood, stone, or other solid material. The male then places this spire in the shallow areas of a natural water source. After mating, the female and male place their eggs (as many as five in a single laying) in specially carved hollows within the spire, open to fresh sunlight but protected by the twisting sculpture. At the time of birth, a young lizard fights its way out of the egg, down the spire to the water, and lives the first few months beneath the waves of their birthplace. Lizardfolk hatcheries are low areas of the lake or river where tall spinnerets of stone or wood jut out above the waterline. Hatcheries have several spires in use, guarded constantly by attentive parents or tribe members. (#2) Occasionally, the dark elves harvest a few eggs, taking them to their libraries for their own use.

The dark elves know of all the hatcheries in Hosuth, except one. (#2a) Protected by part of the landslide that drowned the old dark elf city, the hatchery hides within small caves that opened up along the edge of the Southern Lake (location F). The slave resistance jealously guards this hatchery, and the lizardfolk there fight, kill, and die to protect the secret of its existence.

C. LIZARDFOLK COMMONS

The lizardfolk populate the lower class areas of Hosuth, as well as émigrés from other cities that did not have the resources to purchase better housing. In general, most of the lower class areas are lizardfolk; the rest falls equally between humans, halflings, and other demi-human races.

The vegetation in this region of the city grows sporadically, untamed and wild. Trees rise randomly on the riverbanks, and small groves of marshy grasses hide many houses and small gathering places. Numerous huts spread along the top of the hillocks, and the roads in the area are simple dirt paths that lead from a hut to the nearest river or main tributary. The huts are primitive, built of thatched grasses and packed mud. The more civilized buildings may be wood or hewn lumber, but even these buildings rarely have window shutters. All are open to the air, built to incorporate breezes that blow through the huts during the cooler summer seasons. This means that they are never locked; most of them have no doors. Anyone can easily slip into or out of a hut in the Lizardfolk Commons and avoid the notice of a passing guard.

Lizardfolk Gathering Halls

Three large halls remain from the days when the lizardfolk controlled Hosuth (Hssith). These buildings (#3) are popular sites for trade and at night become taverns for drinking, feasting, and brawling. The dark elves allow the lizardfolk freedom of movement through their portions of the city, although guards quickly break up any serious fighting. Lizardfolk cannot carry weapons, and must fight in hand-to-hand contests rather than traditional tests.

In current times, these brawls have become more of a sport, and the dark elves allow them to occur. Often, the lizardfolk announce brawls ahead of time, creating an informal gladiatorial competition. Anyone within the city may join the fights (though the dark elves rarely do), and bets are made as much as a week in advance of the actual fight. To encourage certain fights, lizardfolk may place a prize on the head of more advanced or renowned victors. A percentage of the prize money goes to the victor, with the remainder going to the house and dark elves.

The Resistance

Unknown to the dark elves, several small resistance cells of lizardfolk hide within the two lakes around Hosuth. The largest of these cells (#4) holds 40-50 lizardfolk young born in the secret hatchery in the Southern Lake or otherwise smuggled out of the city. The lizardfolk train these children to fight, to survive in the wilderness, and in the old religion. An old shaman named Tssicho teaches the children, and if they have exceptional skill, also in potion making, spellcasting, and other outlawed practices. The future of the resistance lies in these children.

D. MERCHANTS AREA

Hosuth welcomes all merchants, travelers, and adventurers to the city. The dark elf overlords believe that steady supplies of trade make Hosuth profitable and healthy. To this end, the dark elves do everything they can to keep the Merchants' Bazaars active, safe, and fully stocked with locally produced goods and services.

Merchants' Plaza

At the edge of the northern lake, the largest portion of merchants and traders congregate on a large plateau formed of three massive hillocks. Seven tremendous stone bridges connect and support the shops that stand on either side. Criers walk the area with local news and regional warnings. As such, adventurers find work here easily, most often guarding caravans or eliminating some local threat within the surrounding marshland. Anyone caught stealing had best learn a trade without a right hand. Public execution follows if there is a second offense.

The Coiled Serpent

A particularly notable lower class inn stands to the west of the Plaza (#5), overlooking the river hatchery. The Coiled Serpent was once a lizardfolk gathering hall, but has been transformed. The windows are large, and the doors are never closed (someone is awake within the tavern at all times). It makes for a cool resting place even in the heat of the marsh summer.

However, the very openness that encourages an easy resting-place makes the Coiled Serpent open to thievery. Burglars slip in and out of the inn's wide windows, lifting treasures from the patrons as they sleep. Adventurers that take rooms within the Coiled Serpent had best be wary. The inn takes no responsibility for lost items. The only

comfort patrons have rests in the city's heavy-handed treatment of thieves and few dare to risk the wrath of the dark elf overlords for a few coppers or a jeweled bauble.

The owner of the Coiled Serpent, Ysarr, is free, having purchased his freedom by betraying revolutionaries and shamans of his own kind to the dark elf overlords. He and his wife Gress live in the Coiled Serpent. The lizardfolk consider Ysarr a traitor, and he rarely visits the Lizardfolk Commons. The dark elves, on the other hand, hold Ysarr and Gress in the highest esteem. The guards keep close watch on the inn because of their obvious loyalty.

E. DARK QUARTER

The commonly termed Dark Quarter of Hosuth is home to largest population of dark elves. Although a few dark elves reside over their shops in the Merchants Area of the city, most have built homes here. The architecture is vastly different from the rest of the city, owing to ninety years of elven occupation. The vegetation grows together, forming a huge ceiling of plant-life over streets and houses. In a few places sunlight still breeches the vegetative ceiling, but the area is constantly dark and oppressively hot.

Capitol Buildings

The largest buildings in the quarter are those that house the dark elf libraries and laboratories. The Library (#6) was once the largest temple of the lizardfolk's sun god, but the dark elves executed all the shamans and rebuilt to suit their needs. It was the only stone building in the city, making it, by elven standards, the most stable and least primitive. The building has since expanded to more than three times its initial size. It covers four hillocks and curves in magnificent arches over the rushing river tributaries. This building is constantly supervised, and manned every minute of the day and night by a vigilant staff of librarians.

The second of the large buildings in the Dark Quarter is the Grand Capitol (#7). This building serves many of the city's functions: it is a meeting hall for the dark elf overlords, a laboratory for alchemical and sorcerous experiments, and a dungeon to keep subjects for these experiments. This building also serves as living quarters for a number of government scribes and the city reeve, and houses the treasury of Hosuth.

The last of the large buildings in the quarter is known as the Temple of Ichor (#8). None may enter unless they are dark elven. Rumors run through the city that the dark elf god is a deity of secrets, a champion of chaos and venom, a large spider-woman, or a demon that actually lives within the temple in the form of a priest. Younger, uninitiated dark elves do not know the true nature of their deity, and those who have been inducted into its mysteries do not speak of it for fear of losing their tongues in the night.

Mutation Chambers

Several of the chambers within the Grand Capitol are best left untouched; these belong to the dark elf sorcerers. The wizards who designed and equipped the laboratories specialize in mutative and transformation spellcraft. They push to discover a means to mutate lizardfolk eggs into more useful and civilized creatures. Primarily, their goal is to create a controllable and sturdy creature to explore the ruined areas beneath the Southern Lake and retrieve the items, magical creations, and spells left below when the cataclysm destroyed the original dark elf city.

This project requires hundreds of lizardfolk eggs, brought here from the hatcheries for examination and mutation. Some of the progeny lived, and have returned to the slave society within the city. Others proved too unstable, and were put down. The elves keep the somewhat useful creatures in locked cells beneath the Grand Capitol for further research, breeding, and eventual destruction. Of course, word of the experiments has leaked to the lizardfolk populace of the city. Thus, the resistance has created a secret spire in the Southern Lake (*see #2a, in hatcheries*).

Waterways

Stonework cordons separate the river tributaries and marshy lowlands of the original city of Hssith from the Dark Quarter. Unlike the Lower Common areas (a haphazard collection of huts on hillocks), the Dark Quarter boasts stone waterways, sewer systems, dikes to hold back floodwaters, and high arched bridges facilitate travel. Two major ways exist to traverse the Dark Quarter. The first method is to take a river raft through the thicker tributaries. The second method is on foot, though the twisting roads and irregularly placed bridges turn a short walk into a long hike over bridges and down cobblestone paths. Experimental high roads, somewhat like the tree bridges of the wood elves (though the dark elves scowl at such comparisons) are under development. Being incomplete, it is not a recommended method for travelers.

The dark elves maintain a series of lightly armed checkpoints along the river canals and on various bridges in the Dark Quarter. These checkpoints are primarily formalities, but they ensure that no weapons enter the Dark Quarter unbound.

Arachne's Cavern

Arachne's Cavern is an upper class inn that caters to unusual desires, exotic tastes, and jaded pleasures. It provides expensive and secure chambers for travelers to the city, where they may indulge their fancies. The inn has several rooms, as well as sixteen complete suites. The inn's kitchens are known for their extraordinary dark elf cuisine. The Cavern also houses a stable of slaves chosen for their beauty or artistic abilities. In order to keep the slaves peaceful and pliable, the proprietress drugs them with her special fungus potions. The potions remove any desire to escape or resist a client's requests.

Arachne is the name given by the proprietress of the inn, though it is clearly a pseudonym. She is a dark elf sorceress that retired to the now-sunken dark elf city below the Southern Lake. When the elves seized the city of Hosuth, she loaned a great deal of her knowledge to the initial takeover, and her inn was one of the first all-stone buildings built within the Dark Quarter.

F. SOUTHERN LAKE

The southern lake near the city is relatively new, created during the earthquake ninety years ago. At that time, a tremendous landslide shattered the mountainsides near the river, collapsing and allowing the water of the river to pour down into the open catacombs beneath the mountain. The damage from flooding waters destroyed the dark elf city beneath the surface. The survivors of that cataclysm rose to the surface and captured Hssith, enslaving its people and creating a new civilization — Hosuth.

The lake is extraordinarily deep. Below the surface lies a series of catacombs and the dark elf ruins. They are extraordinarily dangerous; the rock and mud floors are unstable and could easily collapse. Many treasures are trapped in the depths of the southern lake, defying even the powerful dark elf mages. Adventurers have tried, but few return.

G. HIDDEN TEMPLE

In the wettest, nastiest area of the marsh north of the city, the lizardfolk have erected a new temple to their sun god. This temple contains many ostracized shamans; if they are discovered, they and their allies face execution. Dark elf law prohibits the worship of the lizardfolk sun god.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

ARTIFACTS & RELICS

Someone must retrieve a powerful magic item in the southern lake. Either its emanations cause the ground to loosen, increasing the possibility of another earthquake, or the power contained in the item stops another earthquake from happening. The dark elves provide underwater transportation (one of the mutated amphibians they have created) and several potions of water breathing if necessary.

BURN!

Someone lit fires in the city. It is weeks before the monsoon season and during this dry time of year the city is especially susceptible, particularly in the Dark Quarter where vegetation is everywhere. Are these fires arson? Poor construction? Or magic gone awry?

CAPTIVE BEAUTY

The PCs witness a beautiful high elf girl led to Arachne's Cavern for use as a slave. Drugged and unable to resist, she also carries the mark of a prominent high elven house. If the high elves discover she is here, they declare war on the city. On the other hand, they might reward a group of

THE CITY OF HOSUTH



- A. Edge of City
 B. Northern Lake
 C. Lizardfolk Commons
 D. Merchant's Quarters
 E. Dark Quarter
 F. South Lake
 G. Hidden Temple

1. Captain's Tower
 2. Hatcheries
 2A. Secretary
 3. Lizardfolk gather halls
 4. Largest Residence Cell
 5. Coiled Serpent Inn
 6. Library
 7. Grand Capitol Building
 8. Temple of Ichor



adventurers that return their cherished daughter. Either way, if the new slave leaves Arachne's Cavern, the proprietress is going to be very angry.

DISTRUST

This adventure hook takes advantage of the population's innate distrust and hostility toward each other. With tempers running high, what happens when an outside force threatens the city? Can the PCs unite the people of Hosuth or will it drive a wedge into its fractured schism?

FLOODED!

A dike breaks in the upper river and the resultant tide floods both the Lower Commons and Dark Quarter. This happens during the monsoon season, when the city is particularly vulnerable. What happens if the party discovers signs of sabotage? Is the resistance responsible? And if not the resistance, then who?

FORBIDDEN EXPERIMENTS

An experiment conducted on the lizardfolk eggs goes horribly awry. The creature is powerful and emerges in a bloodthirsty frenzy. The mutated egg beast escapes, terrorizing the city. It hides in the deepest portions of the waterways during the day and rises at night to feed. In never strikes the same place twice. Both elves and lizardfolk ask the PCs stop it, but how?

FROM BELOW

Some dark magic creature, long forgotten and thought destroyed, rises from the southern lake. This creature may be a survivor of a rival dark elf house, or a powerful lich. It is intelligent and determined to destroy the dark elves that live in the city of Hosuth. While this may seem like a good thing to the lizardfolk, the city relies on the dark elf leadership. Without government, the entire city crumbles.

NORTHERN LAKE

Someone has poisoned the southern lake, contaminating the city's entire water supply. This is a contact drug, so merely swimming in the waterways affects the lizardfolk with plague-like symptoms. This plague does not affect many of the dark elves (who use gondolas to pass through the waterways), but the lizardfolk of the Lower Commons are in sad shape. The dark elves care little for the plight of their slaves, but the city depends on the labor of the lizardfolk. Without the lower classes to perform menial labor, how do the elves function? What happens if the lizardfolk suspect that the elves drugged the water or that it's another experiment, this time on the populace as a whole?

POLITICS

The overseer is dying, so the elves must choose an heir. Political turmoil results from a replacement whose support is not unanimous. Will the new overseer of the city treat the lizardfolk well and give them their freedom? Will she be harsher and subject the lizardfolk to further executions

and public torture? Who are the candidates, and what secrets are they are trying to protect? Do the lizardfolk support one over another and do they have the currency to hire adventurers that can ensure her victory? Does a powerful guild support one over another, spending money to secure her favor?

PREDATORS

Monsters native to the marshes attack the city. Although powerful in their own right, the monsters fled the swamp in fear of larger, more dangerous monsters. The city falls into a state of martial law and the elves conscript everyone into the defending militia. Now armed with spears, the lizardfolk present a viable, internal threat. All the while the attacks continue. Hired as mercenaries and advisors, the PCs must choose between constantly watching the city or defeating the greater horror that lives in the swamp.

SHAMAN'S FLIGHT

Discovered as a shaman (an illegal practice) by the city guard, a lizardfolk named Fthss flees through the city. He takes temporary refuge in the PCs' quarters, implicating them in his escape. Whether the PCs meant to help him or not, they are now involved, and face danger from the enthusiastic City Guard. Fthss pleads to be taken out of the city, promising them magic or favors. He knows where the hidden temple is and only asks that they get him to the swamp.

THIEVES GUILD

A new guild of thieves has moved into the city, pressuring the dark elf overlord to condone their operation and rescind the obsessively stringent laws against theft. This affects merchant trade, as well as the safety of the populace, but the guild's blackmail and bribes affect the overseer, who is ready to make a decision. Are other guilds interested in seeing the thieves put down? And what affect will this have on the dark elves' dreams of greater commerce?

VISITING DIGNITARIES

Ambassadors from elsewhere, a foreign city, perhaps human or a tolerant nation of Elves, arrive to negotiate permanent trade relations with the overlords of Hosuth. If successful, it could mark the next era of "improvements" to the primitive city around the Dark Quarter. The lizardfolk who understand the delicacy of the trade negotiations might try to sabotage them. The dignitaries might express that they are willing to deal, but not with a city that uses slave labor.

NPCS

YSARR & GRESS (LIZARDFOLK)

Ysarr and his wife Gress are the owners and proprietors of the Coiled Serpent, in the Merchants Quarter of the city. Three years ago, they turned in a cabal of lizardfolk

shamans that met in the waterways below the Coiled Serpent. This act of loyalty won Ysarr and Gress their freedom and the Dark Elves executed six illegal practitioners. It was a huge blow to the lizardfolk population of Hosuth.

The others shun Ysarr and Gress. They are outcasts who consort with dark elves, maintaining their inn based on the good will of their former masters. The Coiled Serpent is now the most profitable middle-class inn within the city, but their business comes from tourists and travelers, not the patronage of the local population.

Ysarr is stubborn, unwilling to admit this mistake. He won his freedom, and it does not matter to him that he earned it with the blood of his kin. His wife's eggs are safe from mutation, and his wife and children live without fear. He ignores the sins of his past, making do as best he can without his people. White scars cover his scaled back — punishments from the lash of a whip when he was a child. He never wants his own children to know such humiliation. Ysarr is a fair merchant, gathering appropriate sums for the use of his inn, and paying his taxes diligently. He does not like the laughing, fawning dark elves that remind him of his "loyal" act, but he smiles and grits his fanged teeth. With their money, he educates his children and plans, one day, to send them far away from here.

Gress, on the other hand, laments her part in the executions. She and her husband were told that the shamen faced exile rather than death. She believes that the dark elves lied to her, and regrets turning in the shamen for their "justice." Gress uses her freedom to help the resistance movement, unbeknownst to her husband. She hides badly treated slaves in unused rooms of the inn, and finds travelers willing to smuggle them out of the city. She divides small portions of the inn's supplies and smuggles them to the hidden temple. If the dark elves find out, it means her death as a traitor. But Gress cannot stand the guilt of her past actions, and she is willing to take the risk... so long as Ysarr never finds out.

Ysarr and Gress have four children and a newly laid clutch of three eggs at the hatchery in the river near their inn. Their oldest son, Tsirr, shows signs of becoming a shaman — signs that Ysarr beats out of the child, or tries to ignore. Gress helps Tsirr understand the powerful forces shaping his destiny, and helps him hide his growing talent from his father. Still, she knows that she must soon take Tsirr to the hidden temple. His talent will neither disappear nor remain quiet, and she must save him from Ysarr before he destroys his son's greatest gift.

Ysarr and Gress, Lizardfolk: CR 10; SZ L (magical beast, earth); HD 12d10+72; hp 165, 143; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 45 ft., fly 75 ft. (average); AC 16 (+1 Dex, -1 size, +6 natural); Atks 2 Claws +16 Melee (1d4+5), bite +14 melee (1d6+5), gore +14 melee (1d6+6); SQ Damage reduction 5/+1, freeze; SV Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7; AL CE. Skills: Hid +13, Listen +8, Spot +4. Feats: Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw, bite, gore).

OVERSEER TAMN'SHARR VEREKK

Tamn'sharr is one of the most powerful magic users in the city, and the only Master Mage that survived the cataclysm that destroyed the original dark elf homeland deep beneath Hosuth's mountain range. He remembers the cool stone arches, the vast caverns and subtle enchantments that had lasted since the time of his ancient ancestors. He remembers the beauty in the depths of the earth, and he longs for her magnificent bounty. But now, like the others who survived, he was trapped here, in Hell.

Well, if this Hell was going to be his home, then he would conquer it with an iron lash, and never forgive it for not being the homeland he was born to rule.

His hatred of the surface world twists Tamn'sharr's entire outlook. He hates the heat, the sun and light, and he hates the native inhabitants — especially the unfortunate lizardfolk that live in Hosuth. He has no pity for their pain and suffering under dark elf rule, only contempt for their primitive society.

The sorcerer Tamn'sharr is responsible for the organization of the city of Hosuth. Immediately upon capturing and enslaving the native people, he instituted the government of seven overseer lords that still rule the city today. He stands as the most powerful of the overseers, both in political pull and in magical prowess, and has no intention of giving up the post for any reason. Other overseers are the voices of reason, guiding the city toward exterior trade and opening Hosuth's gates to foreign merchants. Tamn'sharr is an isolationist, a spiteful wizard with no respect for any life other than his own. If he genuinely believed that Hosuth could exist without foreign aid and incoming trade, he would have cut off any and all contact with the outside world. Others have convinced him otherwise, and so, he allows the contact grudgingly.

He works early into the morning, and rarely rises until the sun is well past the heat of noon. His personal chambers cool with magical spells to better resemble his old towers within the fallen dark elf city. He spends his days between the council chambers of government and the lower laboratories. Working unceasingly to create a creature that is both pliable and sturdy, Tamn'sharr wants to create a breed of lizardfolk to go down to the catacombs beneath the southern lake. There, they begin long-term work to clear the city and reroute the river, to reclaim the dark elf homeland. He prizes anything that can aid him in this goal, and he covets such knowledge.

Tamn'sharr has often hired mercenaries of all races to go down into the sunken city and map the extent of the damage. This provides him with current accounts of the area (to augment his own scrying), and also eliminates a good deal of the mercenaries that fester within the city of Hosuth — and without Tamn'sharr paying them anything at all. He simply provides information about the city (not about the truly rich parts, or anywhere that magic items might actually be located), and tempts the adventurers with tales of gold and lost magic. Then he watches them go,

series on them for the next few days to update his map and learn of their discoveries. When they die, he moves on and continues his own explorations.

SLESTIK

A slestik is the name given to a particularly dangerous variant of lizardfolk created by dark elf wizards. Not all slestik are exactly the same - some are larger, some smaller — but they all have certain abilities in common. GMs should feel free to modify this template slestik for any individual encounter. Slestik are extremely dangerous opponents — only the finest, heartiest beasts manage the escape through the city, and out into the wild.

Because the dark elves have occasionally failed to properly tend these beasts, several slestik managed to escape. A small community of the creatures now resides in the muck and mire at the far edge of the northern lake. These creatures are breeding on their own, and their genetic mutations have proven largely stable. Still, an occasional new mutation springs up, which may or may not continue in the next generation.

Slestik stand just under 8 feet tall, but always walk hunched over in a nearly fetal position. They are covered in greenish scales like a dragon, but their heads and jaws are more serpentine. They have long claws that extend from webbed fingers and toes, and a finned tail suited for extremely fast swimming.

Slestik, Lizardfolk: CR 1; SZ M (humanoid, aquatic, reptilian); HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+6 natural); Atks 2 Claws +2 melee (1d4+1), bite +0 melee (1d4); SQ Cold Resistance 5; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10; AL LN. Skills: Balance +4, Craft (any) +3, Hide +3, Jump +7

NEW SPELL

MUTATE EGG

This spell, created by the Dark Elf wizard Tamn'sharr Verekk, creates new creatures from an otherwise normal egg. The spell can affect any egg, mutating it from the original pattern into something vastly different, with only cursory features and traits of the parent race. The spell itself is not perfect, and has a great capacity for error. The creatures so created may be born dead, horribly mutated, or without any real alterations in their original genetic patterns. The creatures created with this spell have recessive characteristics, but breed true.

Mutate Egg

Transmutation

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 5, Magic 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 day

Range: Touch

Target: One unhatched, gestating egg

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

With this spell, the caster mutates a single egg into an unknown form, forcing advanced and uncontrollable genetic changes upon the gestating young. The most common use of this spell is to create monsters and beasts to be used as watchdogs, or by evil wizards who wish to create an army of powerful beings from an initially weak race.

The spell mutates the creature's genetic make-up, leaving a new creation with roughly similar traits. If the egg belonged to a reptile, the creature created is almost always reptilian. The same can be said for avians, insects, and so on.

The mutations occur on a scale of 1–10 (in order of magnitude from the initial creature). To determine the exact effects, see the chart below. This spell only works on eggs, not pre-pubescent creatures, or on pregnant mammals. The spellcaster can exert some control over the mutations (adjusted roll by 1) with a successful Research roll as the ritual is being cast. The spell takes a full 24 hours to cast on any single egg, and is quite exhausting (requiring 1d4 days of bed rest for the wizard after the casting).

Material Component: One perfect egg from a reptile or avian, and 2,000 gp worth of laboratory equipment and materials, consumed in the casting.

1. Creature's external body suffers minor changes: horns, fins, coloration, tail.
2. Creature's external body suffers moderate changes: gills, wings, extra arms, legs, or tail.
3. Creature's external body suffers extreme changes: extra heads, extreme size change, (up to 4 times the original size), carapace or exterior bone structure develops.
4. Creature's internal organs suffer minor changes: change of location, retracted claws, poison sacs, additional stomachs.
5. Creature's internal organs suffer moderate changes: radical change in diet (herbivore to carnivore) or oxygen use (becomes amphibious or water-breathing),
6. Creature's internal organs suffer extreme changes: blood is poisonous, creature's bone structure alters dramatically, interior organs liquefy.
7. Creature suffers intellect alterations: becomes significantly more intelligent or less intelligent, gains minor extra-sensory powers or abilities.
8. Creature suffers magical alterations: gains or loses magic resistance, resistance to damage, gains minor magical abilities.
9. Creature gains major magical or psionic abilities as well as sentience. Is predisposed to a randomly chosen alignment.
10. Creature becomes a PC race. Roll all stats as if he were a PC.

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